

July 28, 1999
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USDA Secretary Dan Glickman
200-A Whitten Building
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

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I have a growing concern over the rapid acceleration of genetically engineered food. While hybridization has gone on for many years increasing yields and nutritional value it has been tested over many growing seasons by natural cross-breeding. Norman Borlaug's work is an example of careful crossing of wheat varieties with no known negatives after 30 years.

Most of what I have learned is first hand as a land owner and what little I have read or seen on TV. I have not read much in the popular media. There is little that an individual can do to alert and educate the public but you are in a position to have a global impact on the use of this new technology. Some of my concerns, to be stated briefly, are as follows:

1. Individual growers are losing options on seeds, herbicides and pesticides. Small farmers are hurt the worst, especially in developing countries.

2. Agriculture is being dominated more and more by the few large chemical corporations and their subsidiaries. Leaders are Monsanto, DuPont, Ciba-Geigy and others. Most of the major seed companies are now owned by chemical firms which are primarily interested in profits. I don't know whether Pioneer is still holding out against DuPont's takeover--if so they are to commended.

3. Note should be taken of the European countries' unwillingness to accept transgenic seeds. The reasons may seem unfounded to the USDA and the chemical corporations but should be carefully studied.

4. There must be better government regulation with all regulatory agencies, EPA, FDA and APHIS working together. Too often it seems that the corporations have been allowed by government to do their own testing and regulating and allowed patents on new technologies after a short test period.

5. There have not been notable or consistent gains in yields and as yet no noted increases in nutritional value.

6. Labeling must be improved since many prepared foods contain a mixture of transgenic and non-transgenic food.

Some manipulation of the world-wide food source has been and can continue to be positive but since all life depends on food, rapid manipulation should be discouraged. Ethical concerns must not be overlooked in the maintaining of our relation to our home--planet earth and its people.

Sincerely,

Betty Jo Miller

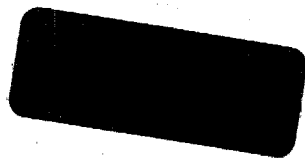
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Copies to: Sens. Brownback and Roberts and Rep. Moore

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